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Landmark Bill Protects College Students from Tragic Fires
Fire Sprinkler Systems will be installed in Institutions of Higher Education

Madison, WI (December 22, 2005): Governor Doyle signed into law a landmark bill that will protect college students living in various types of campus housing from death and injury caused by fire.

Led by Senator Ron Brown (R-Eau Claire) and Representative Rob Kreibich (R-Eau Claire), Assembly Bill 544 requires automatic fire sprinkler systems installed in all new construction residence facilities on private campuses, all residence halls greater than 60 feet in height, all Greek housing on private and public colleges and privately owned high-rise buildings that provides student housing. Five years ago, a bill was passed requiring fire sprinkler systems installed in all high-rise residence halls located on public campuses. Colleges have eight years to comply.

“This legislation is groundbreaking in the national movement to reduce tragic fire deaths of college students,” said Dan Gengler of the National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA) and a former Deputy Fire Chief with the Milwaukee Fire Department. “Fire is non-discriminatory. This legislation will protect students and can ultimately save lives. As a result, Wisconsin will be one of the safest states when it comes to campus housing fire safety. The passage of this landmark legislation illustrates the commitment of these lawmakers to protect all of our college students, Gengler said.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) an average of 1,500 fires causes \$9 million in damage to university residence halls and Greek housing each year. Additional studies show that deaths caused by hotel and motel fires – the structures most similar to dorms – were reduced by 91% when sprinklers were present. Moreover, the NFPA has never been able to document a single instance of a multiple loss of life in a building with a sprinkler system that is fully functional in more than 100 years of their existence.

AB 544 passed with bipartisan effort and garnered the support of the Wisconsin State Firefighters' Association, the Professional Firefighters of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs Association, the Wisconsin Alliance for Fire Safety and the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges & Universities (WAICU).

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